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Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6069th meeting

Friday, 16 January 2009, 11.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ripert	(France)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Ms. Eloeva
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Letter dated 22 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/920)

Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process (S/2009/1)

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09-21130 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 22 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/920)

Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process (S/2009/1)

The President (*spoke in French*): I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative of Nepal to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Acharya (Nepal) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I propose, with the consent of the Council and in accordance with the provisions of article 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, to extend an invitation to Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal and head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Martin to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process, document S/2009/1.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal and head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal. This will be the last briefing that Mr. Martin will give to the Council in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. On behalf of the members of the Council, I should therefore like to express our gratitude to him and tell him how much we have appreciated, year after year, the effectiveness of his efforts at the helm of the United Nations Mission in Nepal, his honest and direct interaction with the Council and the sincerity of his commitment to the peace process in Nepal. We shall remember him fondly and wish him every success in his future endeavours. I am sure the members of the Council associate themselves with those sentiments.

I now give the floor to the Special Representative.

Mr. Martin: Thank you for those kind words, Mr. President. This is indeed the tenth and last time that I shall brief the Council on the assistance of the United Nations in support of Nepal's peace process, and in particular the work of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). Although neither the peace process nor the Government's desire for the support of UNMIN has come to a conclusion, it is an appropriate moment not only to consider developments since the last briefing, in November, but also to reflect on the achievements and remaining challenges in sustaining peace in Nepal.

First, let me report on developments, positive and negative, since the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/1) was written. Most important for the mandate of UNMIN, political agreement has finally been reached regarding the composition and terms of reference of the special committee to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate Maoist army personnel; its first meeting was held today in Kathmandu. Each of four major parties, including the Nepali Congress, which remains outside the Government coalition, has two representatives, and the Prime Minister is presiding personally. This will be especially welcome to the Council as the effective functioning of the special committee is of critical importance not only to the completion of UNMIN's mandate, but to the overall success of the peace process.

There has been progress too regarding the work of the Constituent Assembly and cooperation among the political parties towards the drafting of a new constitution. The chairpersons of the committees of the Assembly have been chosen on the basis of agreement among the larger political parties, although not to the satisfaction of all smaller parties. The former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified

Marxist-Leninist) (UML), Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal, agreed to the proposal of the Maoist leadership that he should accept nomination to the Assembly and chair its Constitutional Committee, which has a central responsibility for reaching agreement on the overall draft constitution and the challenge of enabling its completion by May 2010.

There have been discussions among the major parties, including between the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) — which has now been renamed the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) following its merger with a smaller communist party, although I shall still refer to it as the CPN (M) — and the Nepali Congress about establishing a greater degree of cooperation in completing the peace process and drafting the constitution.

The Nepali Congress ended its boycott of the legislature-parliament after the Prime Minister reported to parliament that fresh instructions had been given to implement his undertakings in response to its demands, including the return of property and ending the paramilitary activities of the Young Communist League, which will be monitored by a parliamentary committee.

The Government's efforts through negotiations to bring an end to the violence by armed groups operating in the Tarai have now resulted in initial agreements setting forth conditions for talks being signed with four such groups, while other informal contacts have taken place and continue.

However, there have been clashes between the Maoist Young Communist League and the UML's Youth Force, in one case leading to the amputation of the leg of a Youth Force member. Maoist trade unionists have used violence or threats of violence against media critical of Maoist conduct. The horrific murder last Sunday of a woman journalist in the Tarai by a gang of perpetrators so far unidentified has further exemplified the weak rule of law and the threats faced by journalists, especially outside Kathmandu, from various sources.

Public discontent is mounting with the inability to maintain electricity supply — now reduced to eight hours a day for many consumers — although the major responsibility rests with previous Governments through decades of underinvestment and neglect. This power shortage is now combining with trade union action to seriously threaten the operation of factories and, thus, employment opportunities.

A recent controversy of particular concern to UNMIN and the peace process relates to recruitment by the Nepal Army and its recognition of the authority of the elected Government; this has a potential seriousness which I think requires me to explain its background. The code of conduct agreed at the outset of the ceasefire in 2006 committed both parties not to recruit new people. When the Agreement on Monitoring the Management of Arms and Armies was being negotiated in November 2006, with the United Nations acting as secretariat to the negotiation, the Nepal Army argued that it should nonetheless be permitted to continue to fill vacancies. This was initially supported by the Government side, but it was resisted by the Maoist side and was not agreed. The stipulation of the Agreement that recruiting additional armed forces is prohibited unless mutually agreed by the parties should thus be understood to apply to any recruitment, including the filling of vacancies. The Maoist army was the first to breach the Agreement by bringing thousands of new recruits, many of them minors, into their cantonments; they eventually either left the cantonments or were disqualified by UNMIN's verification, although as the report of the Secretary-General emphasizes yet again, the discharge of those disqualified who remain in the cantonments is long overdue.

Meanwhile, in mid-2007 the Maoist side complained to the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC) that the Nepal Army was undertaking recruitment. The Nepal Army then confirmed that they were recruiting to fill vacancies; regrettably, they had not informed the JMCC of this at the outset. The JMCC, which operates by consensus, could not resolve the issue and referred it to me. I wrote to the then Prime Minister, who was also Minister of Defence, setting out UNMIN's view that this recruitment was a breach of the Agreement, and met with the Chief of Army Staff to communicate this to him. Eventually the Secretary of Defence responded, maintaining that recruitment to fill vacancies, up to the standing strength of 95,700 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed, was not a breach of any agreement.

In November 2008 the Nepal Army again placed advertisements for further recruitment. The Army states that they had written to the Ministry of Defence

to notify that they intended to recruit to fill vacancies and went ahead after having received no reply. Again, UNMIN and the Maoist army were not informed, through the JMCC or otherwise. At a time when no progress was being made regarding the future of Maoist army personnel, this was the subject of strong exception within the cantonments. The Deputy Commander of the Maoist army stated publicly that the Maoist army would itself recruit to fill vacancies. I stated UNMIN's consistent position that any new recruitment by either army is a breach of the Agreement. Following a Cabinet discussion, the Ministry of Defence wrote to instruct the Nepal Army to suspend its recruitment; the Nepal Army is reported to have replied that the process was almost complete and suspension would be inappropriate. The Minister of Defence, one of the CPN (M) members of the Government, criticized a public statement by the Chief of Army Staff and threatened action against him. Other political actors publicly supported recruitment by the Nepal Army to fill vacancies. The Minister of Defence and the Chief of Army Staff have since met to discuss the issue, but it is not clear that it is resolved. I have expressed concern to the Chief of Army Staff that the Nepal Army has not acted in this matter with good faith towards the United Nations as the mandated monitor of the Agreement.

This controversy, at a time when what is needed is cooperation among the political actors and between the armies to resolve issues through the special committee, is symptomatic, and I fear may be indicative of difficulties ahead. Before I address further those difficulties, I want to reiterate recognition of the great achievements of Nepal's peace process, to which the Secretary-General and I have paid tribute on numerous occasions, as indeed has the Council. When I went to Nepal more than three and a half years ago, in May 2005, to open the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the armed conflict was heading into its tenth year, with grave violations of international humanitarian law being committed by the Maoists and by the security forces, and the Government headed by the then king was curtailing democratic rights. It is the Nepalese political and civil society leaders who brought the armed conflict to an end, negotiated the holding of an election which has produced an inclusive Constituent Assembly, and peacefully introduced a republic.

Nepal's peace process was founded on mutual commitments by the Maoist and non-Maoist political parties, enshrined first in the 12-point understanding of November 2005 and eventually in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of November 2006 and the interim constitution. The CPN (M) committed itself to democratic norms and values, including the competitive multiparty system of government, fundamental human rights, civil liberties, press freedom and rule of law. The parties elected to the 1999 parliament committed themselves to the election of a constituent assembly, the restructuring of the State and progressive socio-economic change.

Regarding the armies which had fought the 10-year armed conflict without either being defeated, Maoist combatants were to be "integrated and rehabilitated", while the Nepal Army was to be "democratized" through an action plan which would determine its appropriate size, develop its national and inclusive character and impart training in accordance with the norms and values of democracy and human rights. All parties agreed to act on the basis of political consensus until a new constitution had been framed by the Constituent Assembly.

For all the important achievements of the peace process, I fear that there is now a danger that these fundamentals are being challenged and eroded. Actions of Maoist cadres which involve violence or threats of violence and do not respect pluralism or the rule of law, the failure of the party leadership to take firm action against those who commit such acts, and internal ideological debates which do not convey a clear long-term adherence to multi-party democracy: all these lead some to question the sincerity of the strategic choice the CPN (M) committed itself to in the 12-point understanding or the ability of its leadership to ensure that the party as a whole respects it. It is crucial, now that the CPN (M) leads the Government, that it act consistently in a manner that allays these doubts. The party which leads the Government has a particular responsibility to strive for the political consensus required for completion of the peace process and the drafting of the new constitution.

But this responsibility rests, too, on other parties that fought the election on a promise of continuing cooperation in Government within the framework of an Interim Constitution which promised socio-economic change and inclusion. The distribution of votes in the Constituent Assembly election of approximately 30 per

cent to the CPN (M) and a little over 20 per cent each to the Nepali Congress and the UML can best be interpreted as a mandate for change, but with an expectation that the parties would cooperate as promised on the basis of their respective support. The emergence of Madhesi parties in the Tarai was a strong reminder that the commitment to inclusion of all groups in all aspects of the State must be carried out if continuing disaffection is not to lead to further violence and ethnic division — perhaps the greatest threat that could lie ahead for Nepal.

Most immediately, however, I believe that the spirit of the original agreements regarding the armies must also be maintained if a critical post-conflict challenge is to be successfully overcome and a stable peace is to be achieved and sustained. As the Secretary-General says in his report, the "Comprehensive Peace Agreement did not fully negotiate the future of the armies, but confined itself to defining processes" (*S/2009/1, para. 64*) with regard to the special committee to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate Maoist army personnel and the action plan for the democratization of the Nepal Army.

But there was an informal understanding among the negotiators that integration meant the incorporation of a significant number but by no means all of the Maoist combatants into the Nepal Army. The action plan for the democratization of the Nepal Army was a significant parallel aspect of the agreements, including a commitment to inclusion, the importance of which has been reinforced by later undertakings in agreements with Madhesi parties. Only if both armies are respected by negotiators on all sides and if both armies recognize their need for change and their subordination to democratic multiparty governance is the special committee likely to reach an outcome which will stabilize the peace.

One need for change to which no political party and neither army is yet truly committed is the need for an end to impunity. I say this with particular regret, as I went to Nepal as representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, yet in more than three and a half years since then not a single perpetrator of a major human rights violation, whether committed during the armed conflict or since its end, has been properly brought to justice.

In May 2006, I was responsible for the publication by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal of a report of investigation into arbitrary detention, torture and disappearances at the Maharajganj barracks in Kathmandu of the then Royal Nepalese Army in 2003 and 2004. No action has resulted. Paragraph 39 of the Secretary-General's report refers to the recent release by OHCHR of its investigations into disappearances in Bardiya district from 2001 to 2003, citing 156 cases of disappearances linked to State authorities, mostly after detention by the then Royal Nepalese Army, and 14 similar cases attributed to the CPN (M). The report documents the systematic use of torture in the Royal Nepalese Army's Chisapani barracks, and I urge members of the Council to read its chilling details.

The promise to investigate disappearances was first made by the parties in May 2006. It has been reiterated time and time again in later agreements, but only now is legislation to establish a commission to investigate disappearances about to be considered by the Legislature-Parliament. It remains to be seen whether appointments made to this commission will indicate a serious intent to uncover the truth and bring those responsible to justice in the face of the denial and obstruction which have so far characterized the response of the Nepal Army, in particular. Efforts are being made to provide compensation to victims of the conflict, but victims who suffered at the hands of the Maoists, as well as victims of the security forces, are still in distress. The wounds of Nepal's conflict will not be healed by denial or by compensation alone and require the effective implementation of the promises made to pursue truth and justice.

While impunity continues to prevail for violations committed since the end of the conflict, the CPN (M) and other political parties are quick to protect their supporters from justice, rather than to support the impartial application of the rule of law. Even in cases where the perpetrators are known, such as the killings of members of the Young Communist League in Dang district two days before the Constituent Assembly election and the killing of a businessman in a Maoist cantonment site, highlighted in paragraph 44 of the report of the Secretary-General, they are not brought to justice.

The great strength of Nepal's peace process has been the capacity of the Nepalese actors to pursue dialogue to bridge their differences. Such dialogue brought about the 12-point understanding which led to the People's Movement and the end of the armed

conflict; it produced the peace agreements and the Interim Constitution, and paved the way for the Constituent Assembly election; it maintained the framework of the Seven-Party Alliance and eventually overcame substantial disagreements and delays.

Very recently, Prime Minister "Prachanda" has spoken publicly of the need for a new 12-point understanding. That is a matter for the political parties to consider, but in my own view there is indeed a need to re-establish the basis for cooperation among political parties, some of which have emerged since the original Seven-Party Alliance was formed, towards successful completion of the peace process and the drafting of the constitution. Competitive politics must not be allowed to derail these overriding national priorities.

The weakness of the peace process, however, has been the failure to implement commitments made. In my opinion, the need now is therefore not only for a renewed basis of understanding and cooperation, but also for a continuous mechanism for ensuring such implementation. Past agreements have provided for a high-level joint monitoring committee to monitor whether all understandings and agreements are being implemented, a high-level peace commission, and a high-level monitoring committee to monitor implementation of the agreement between the former Interim Government and the United Democratic Madhesi Front. None of these has ever been formed. The Joint Monitoring Coordinating Committee convened by UNMIN remains the only implementation mechanism which has met regularly to fulfil its limited mandate relating to the management of arms and armed personnel. My strong parting advice to the parties, whether they enter into a new understanding or recommit themselves to those they are already bound by, is that they now establish such a comprehensive implementation mechanism.

If I have one particular regret, it is that the parties did not take up our offer in late 2007 for the United Nations to assist by supporting the implementation of peace process commitments more generally than in the case of arms monitoring alone. It could, for example, have assisted the impartial monitoring and implementation of the return of property, which has been a constant impediment to political cooperation. This would in no way have detracted from the fact that the peace process has always been a Nepalese process or infringed upon national sovereignty. The parties have not made full use of what the United Nations has to offer, notwithstanding their recognition that UNMIN's presence has had a value well beyond its specific electoral and arms monitoring functions.

I shall leave Nepal with some anxieties, but few regrets. It has been a privilege to be responsible for the role of the United Nations in supporting two of the basic demands of the people of Nepal: respect for human rights and lasting peace. The two most remarkable moments have been those when the people of Nepal took their future in their own hands: in the 19 days of the People's Movement of April 2006 and in the Constituent Assembly election of April 2008. Their demand for peace, for change and for inclusion was and is unmistakable. I hope that their political leaders will not let them down. I hope, too, that the international community understands that long-term stability is far from having been achieved in Nepal and that, despite the many demands upon it, it will remain concerned for 27 million of the poorest people in Asia, who deserve a better future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Martin for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would also thank you for allowing me yet another opportunity to appear in the Council during the discussion regarding our request for continuation of United Nations support for the peace process in Nepal.

I would like to thank Mr. Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive presentation on developments in the peace process in Nepal since the Council's last discussion on the subject.

On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his personal support for the peace process in Nepal and for his latest report to the Council (S/2009/1) recommending extension of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) by another six months, at our request.

As Mr. Martin has just explained in his brief, following the submission of the report, important political developments have taken place in Nepal that have far-reaching impact on the success of the peace

process. The Constituent Assembly has elected its various committees and the respective chairpersons entrusted to start the task of drafting a new constitution, mostly on the basis of consensus among major political parties. In a statement to the Constituent Assembly on 7 January, the Right Honourable Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" made several important commitments to the implementation of the peace process, including on the issues regarding the return of property and the commitment to continuing the practice of taking all major decisions related to the peace process through consensus among the major political parties. The Government has also started to meaningfully engage some of the Tarai armed groups and has, in fact, already signed framework agreements for negotiations with a few of them.

We understand the concerns of the Secretary-General and of some members of the Council regarding the delay in progress in certain aspects of the peace process, especially on the issue of the integration and rehabilitation of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN (M)) armed personnel in the cantonments.

Though this process has taken some time, it is important to note that an agreement has been reached in the formation of the special committee to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate the Maoist army personnel in the cantonments through consensus and mutual accommodation among the parties represented in the coalition Government and outside. The special committee has now been constituted under the leadership of the Prime Minister and includes representation of all the major political parties. In its first meeting earlier today, the special committee amended the terms of reference and decided to prepare a work plan to complete the integration and rehabilitation process within the next six months.

In view of the remaining tasks in the integration and rehabilitation of the CPN (M) army personnel remaining in the cantonments, we have requested an extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Nepal for another six months. We highly appreciate the Council's support for the extension of the mandate of UNMIN until 23 July 2009.

It is our intention to terminate the United Nations monitoring requirements by that time. In fact, it is our expectation that the monitoring requirements will be substantially reduced as soon as we start the implementation of the political decisions on the integration and rehabilitation process that will be reached in the special committee. We are not contemplating any interim or alternative monitoring arrangements before the termination of the United Nations monitoring presence, because that will only contribute to further delay in the integration process. But the Government of Nepal is committed to taking the necessary measures to help assist the exit strategy of UNMIN, bringing a logical end to the peace process, especially the current monitoring arrangement, within the next six months.

In this regard, we have no objection to the Secretary-General's proposals for further downsizing UNMIN and reducing the rank of head of Mission from special representative to representative.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Nepal, I would like to take this opportunity to place on record our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the excellent manner in which he has carried out the mandate of the Security Council in assistance to the peace process, upon Nepal's request. I would also like to thank his dedicated team at UNMIN for the work it has done for Nepal.

Despite the various challenges, some of which Mr. Martin just mentioned, Nepal's peace process has come a long way since its inception in 2006 and has completed several important milestones, such as the election of the Constituent Assembly and the declaration of Nepal as a federal democratic republic. As we have always done so far, we are confident that we will succeed in bringing the process to a logical conclusion, resolving all the remaining issues through dialogue and mutual accommodation. Though it has its own characteristics and pace, Nepal's peace process will succeed at the end, and the support of both Mr. Martin and the Council will not be in vain.

Before concluding, I would like to express my gratitude to each of the member States for its continued support for the peace process in Nepal.

Mr. Weisleder (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Costa Rica and in my personal capacity, I would like to bid a warm farewell to Ambassador Khalilzad of the United States upon his imminent departure. Ambassador Ripert, the President of the Council, has emphasized central elements of Ambassador Khalilzad's personality and

work in the Council, and we would like to second those fitting impressions. We hope that these greetings will be conveyed to Ambassador Khalilzad.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report of 2 January 2009 (S/2009/1), which updates us on the situation of Nepal. We would also like to thank Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing this morning and for his outstanding work in Nepal over all these years. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Likewise, we thank the Permanent Representative of the Government of Nepal for the information he provided to the Council this morning on recent events.

Nepal is a successful example of democratization and pacification of a society that experienced a bloody armed conflict for many years. That success belongs first and foremost to the Nepalese people, but the United Nations can also be satisfied over these achievements, given its contribution to the process. However, as with any process of social transformation, the changes in Nepal, and especially its pacification, remain incomplete, precarious and fragile following the initial parliamentary and constitutional elections, as we have pointed out in the past. We said then that the transition from monarchy to republic would accentuate differences and contradictions that may have been obscured until now by the civil war. Unfortunately, that has taken place to a significant degree.

We are concerned by several specific matters. First, we still have not seen the dismissal of minors and former Maoist guerrillas who are ineligible to join the army, a process that should take place as soon as possible, pursuant to the request made by the Secretary-General at his last meeting with the Government. We must emphasize the fact that the release of these minors must not depend on the formation of the special committee. For Costa Rica, the issue of child soldiers is of great concern in this and in all other cases.

This morning, we learned the excellent news that the special committee has finally been set up and has held its first meeting. We hope that these events will open the path to addressing other pending matters, such as the return of property, the deadline for which has expired, in accordance with agreements signed and sealed; the activities of paramilitary groups affiliated with young Maoists; the demobilization of combatants who were minors in May 2006; and the problem of new illegal seizures of land.

Costa Rica is also concerned by the issue of transitional justice, especially with respect to people who disappeared during the civil war. There can be no peace without justice. We note that the Special Representative highlighted that in particular as one of the important elements in his briefing this morning when he spoke about his concern about continued impunity. In addition, we regard as inexplicable the decision taken by the Nepal Cabinet on 27 October, according to the Secretary-General's report, to withdraw 349 cases filed at the district level either before a court or the District Administration Office, because it considered them to be of a political nature.

It is essential that the various Nepali political forces make a supreme effort to overcome their differences, which constitute obstacles, so that UNMIN can move forward and complete its important mission. The international community faces great and serious challenges, and the Council must set priorities with respect to where, when and how it intervenes. Therefore, we favour a further extension of UNMIN's mandate, as requested by the Secretary-General. At the same time, however, we hope that Nepal's political and social forces, in particular the Government, will clearly note that the international community would like this process to come to a swift conclusion.

In sum, Costa Rica appreciates the significant progress made by Nepal and congratulates its people and its various political and social forces for that. We also appreciate the significant efforts of the Government. We welcome the news that we received today concerning the progress that has enabled the special committee to be established and to begin its work.

At the same time, however, we wish to encourage all those sectors to comply more strictly with the basic commitments undertaken vis-à-vis both their society and the international community, by the agreed deadlines. I would like to stress that that applies in particular not only to the demobilization of former combatants, particularly minors, but also to the drafting of the new constitution, transitional justice and issues basic to economic and social development, both in terms of land ownership and property rights in general and in terms of strengthening the State so that it can provide essential services to the population.

Undoubtedly, those challenges can be better addressed when greater commitment and trust is developed among the political forces.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.